

From: Margaret Gregor, On-Scene Coordinator
Date: 3/23/2015
Reporting Period: 3/20/2015 to 3/23/2015

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	Contract Number:
D.O. Number:	Action Memo Date:
Response Authority: CERCLA	Response Type: Emergency
Response Lead: EPA	Incident Category: Removal Assessment
NPL Status: Non NPL	Operable Unit:
Mobilization Date: 3/23/2015	Start Date: 3/23/2015
Demob Date:	Completion Date:
CERCLIS ID:	RCRIS ID:
ERNS No.:	State Notification:
FPN#:	Reimbursable Account #:

1.1.1 Incident Category

An emergency removal assessment is required to identify potential hazardous materials at the scene of the incident as well as other areas that may have been impacted.

1.1.2 Site Description

On March 20, 2015, EPA was notified of a potential chemical substance exposure that occurred in St. John, USVI. A family of four began vacationing during the week of March 16, 2015 at Capri at Sirenusa, a relatively new condominium within the Sirenusa Condominium Resort that overlooks Cruz Bay, St. John. All four family members slowly started showing neurological symptoms of acute chemical exposure. The suspected chemical is methyl bromide, a highly toxic pesticide. On March 20, 2015, their symptoms worsened to the point that they required medical care, and they were transported to the St. Thomas Hospital. The paramedic who transported the victims later noted that she had also exhibited neurological symptoms following the transport, but her symptoms were resolved by the following day with over-the-counter medications and rest.

On March 22, 2015, the EPA OSC visited St. Thomas Hospital and spoke to the doctor who treated the four victims. The doctor confirmed that the symptoms were consistent with methyl bromide exposure and expressed interest in obtaining help from a physician with experience in treating acute methyl bromide exposure. EPA contacted ATSDR, who provided consultation with a toxicologist and is coordinating the assistance of another physician.

Also on March 22, 2015, the EPA OSC visited the condominium complex where the family had stayed, and confirmed with maintenance personnel that the family had stayed in unit on the second floor above a first-floor unit which had been fumigated with methyl bromide by an exterminator on March 18, 2015. It was suspected that the victims were in the unit for at least a portion of the time that the fumigation was conducted or that they returned to their unit shortly thereafter. The maintenance contact stated that other units in the complex had been fumigated by the same exterminator in October 2014 without incident.

On March 23, 2015, additional personnel were mobilized to assist in the investigation and sampling being planned for this incident, including one person from ERT, two SERAS contractors, two RST contractors, and an additional EPA OSC. EPA is working in coordination with government and local officials as well as ATSDR to complete an assessment of the condominium unit(s) where methyl bromide has been applied, additional off-site areas where methyl bromide may have been applied by the same exterminator, and any potential stockpiles of methyl bromide owned by the exterminator in order to avoid further exposures.

1.1.2.1 Location

The impacted condominium complex is located at 11 Estate Enighed, Cruz Bay, St. John 00830. It is part of a condominium complex within a suburban residential and resort area.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

Methyl bromide is a colorless, odorless chemical that was phased out of use in residential settings in 2005 and is not currently authorized for application in residential properties, but is still permitted for certain agricultural applications. It is corrosive to both the skin and eyes. The symptoms associated with methyl bromide poisoning may include headaches, nausea, vomiting, visual disturbances, malaise, confusion, loss of coordination, slurred speech, and skin, eye, and respiratory irritation. In severe poisonings, paralysis, convulsions, coma, and death may occur. Signs of methyl bromide poisoning are often delayed and may lag from only a few minutes to 48 hours post-exposure. Researchers have suggested that low-level, chronic exposure to methyl bromide affects the nervous system, but the evidence supporting chronic toxicity is inconclusive.

Methyl bromide residues may take several days to offgas. Aeration is necessary before impacted spaces can be safely accessed without PPE.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

Sampling locations within the Sirensa Condominium Resort which may have been fumigated by the same exterminator with methyl bromide have been identified. Sampling equipment has been shipped to St. John/St. Croix for arrival between March 22 and 24, 2015. The sampling team has mobilized to the area and sampling has been scheduled to commence on March 24, 2015. The purpose of this initial sampling will be to confirm the presence chemical utilized for fumigation as well as the approximate quantity and impacted locations.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

Access to the Sirensa Condominium Resort has been recieved and the sampling has been scheduled to begin on March 24, 2015.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

Resources have been mobilized in preparation for the sampling and assessment.

2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

The PRP has been identified and an interview is pending. EPA will work with the Department of Planning and Natural Resources to obtain a complete list of locations where the PRP has used, stored, or is storing methyl bromide, in order to prevent any further exposures.

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

Not applicable at this time.

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

Sampling of the Sirensa Condominium Resort is expected to commence on March 24, 2015.

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

Response activities can be planned when the results of the assessment are received. Response activities may potentially include removal and proper disposal of the fumigant as necessary to protect human health and the environment.

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

A complete list of locations where the subject fumigant (likely methyl bromide) has been utilized and stored will be obtained from the PRP. Sampling and/or additional assessment will be planned at additional locations as appropriate.

2.2.2 Issues

No issues to report at this time.

2.3 Logistics Section

All logistical issues are being handled by EPA Region 2 and the SERAS and RST contracts in coordination with local and government officials.

2.4 Finance Section

2.4.1 Narrative

As of the date of this report, assessment funding under the SERAS and RST contracts is being utilized to conduct the assessment. Updates will be provided as the assessment progresses.

2.5 Other Command Staff

2.5.1 Safety Officer

Safety Officers have been identified through RST and SERAS. Both are drafting Health and Safety Plans.

2.5.2 Liaison Officer

The EPA OSC is acting Liaison Officer with local and government officials.

2.5.3 Information Officer

Geoff Garrison has been designated as the Community Involvement Coordinator for the site. Mr. Garrison can be reached at XXXXXXXX. **Elias Rodriguez** is the press coordinator and can be reached at 212-637-3664. **Christopher Sebastian** is the inter-governmental liaison and can be reached at 212-637-3597. George Zachos is the Regional Public Liaison and can be reached at 1-888-BUDSMAN.

3. Participating Entities

3.1 Unified Command

Unified Command is not currently being used. On March 21, 2015, DPNR referred the response to EPA.

3.2 Cooperating Agencies

EPA is coordinating efforts with various entities that have been extremely helpful in preparation for the assessment, including but not limited to:

- Department of Planning and Natural Resources
- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
- St. John Fire Department
- Sirenusa Condominium Resort and Sea Glass Properties

4. Personnel On Site

All personnel are already located in the USVI or are enroute in preparation for the assessment:

- EPA OSCs (2)
- RST Contractors, Weston Solutions (2)
- EPA ERT (1)
- SERAS Contractors, Lockheed Martin (2)
- DPNR Representatives as necessary
- Fire Department as necessary

5. Definition of Terms

EPA:

DPNR:

OSC:

SERAS:

RST:

ATSDR:

Unified Command - A structure based on the Incident Command System (ICS) that brings together the Incident Commanders of all major organizations involved in the incident in order to coordinate an effective response, while at the same time allowing each to carry out their own jurisdictional, legal, and functional responsibilities.

Sampling -The process of taking environmental media for analysis at a laboratory of its constituents. These tests may require multiple days to complete, but test for a wider array of constituents than monitors.

6. Additional sources of information

6.1 Internet location of additional information/report

www.epaossc.org/SITENAME

ATSDR website:

6.2 Reporting Schedule

At a minimum, POLREPS will be generated on a bi-weekly basis. Should emerging situations need to be provided to parties, spot reports or bulletins will be sent via email.

7. Situational Reference Materials

No information is available at this time.